



## Live Well, Work Well

September 2025

### Are You Prepared for an Emergency?

Disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, floods and earthquakes can strike with little or no warning. Roads may become impassable, power could be out for days and emergency services might be overwhelmed. In these situations, having a plan can make all the difference between chaos and calm.

September is National Preparedness Month, so make a plan for if you need to evacuate your home or get trapped inside for days.

Preparedness isn't just about stocking up on supplies; it's about knowing what to do, where to go and how to stay safe. Consider these five key steps to help you and your household prepare:

1. **Know your risks.** Understand the types of disasters most likely to affect your area. In the Midwest, tornadoes and floods are common. Coastal regions may face hurricanes, while the West Coast is more prone to earthquakes and wildfires.
2. **Create a communication plan.** Make sure every member of your household knows how to reach each other during an emergency. Choose an out-of-town contact person and

establish meeting points in case you're separated.

3. **Assemble an emergency kit.** Your kit should include nonperishable food and water (enough for at least three days), flashlights and extra batteries, basic first-aid supplies, medications and personal hygiene items, important documents (e.g., IDs and insurance papers) in a waterproof container, and a battery-powered radio.
4. **Plan for evacuation and shelter-in-place.** Know your local evacuation routes and shelters. Also, prepare for scenarios where you may need to stay inside your home for several days. Keep extra blankets, a manual can opener and entertainment for kids, if needed.
5. **Include pets in your plan.** Don't forget your furry family members. Ensure you have food, water and any medications they need, and identify pet-friendly shelters in advance.

Visit the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (known as FEMA) website, [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov), to learn more about preparing for emergencies at home, at work and on the road.

# UV Index and Sun Safety

Spending time outdoors can be great for your health and well-being, but protecting your skin from the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays is important. One of the most effective ways to do this is by understanding and using the UV index, a daily forecast that measures the strength of the sun's UV radiation.

The UV index is reported on a scale from 0 to 11+. The higher the value, the greater the potential for harm from unprotected sun exposure.

Children, older adults, and people with fair skin or certain medical conditions may be especially vulnerable to high UV levels. Here's how to use the UV index proactively:

- **Check the index in the morning.** Many weather apps and websites display the UV index alongside the daily forecast.

## Combating the "September Scaries"

As summer fades, individuals may experience a case of the "September Scaries," emotional and psychological stress that occurs with the transition from summer to fall. This phenomenon can happen as kids return to school, work intensifies, the days get shorter and the holiday season looms.

This seasonal transition disrupts routines and can trigger a sense of loss of freedom, sunshine and overall spontaneity. The return to rigid schedules and looming responsibilities may heighten stress, especially for those juggling work, family and other personal responsibilities. Consider these tips for managing stress during the seasonal transition:

- **Write down your worries.** First, it's important to understand what's making you feel worried. Then, you can evaluate if it's rational or not.

- **Adjust your schedule when possible.** If the UV index is high (6 or above), plan outdoor activities for early morning or late afternoon, when the sun's rays are less intense.
- **Take extra precautions when the index spikes.** On days with a very high or extreme rating, minimize direct exposure and prepare accordingly with strong sun protection.
- **Watch for environmental amplifiers.** Snow, sand, water and even pavement can reflect UV rays and increase your exposure.

Checking the UV index as part of your daily routine can help you reduce your risk of sunburn, premature aging and skin cancer while still enjoying time outdoors. Contact your doctor for more information.

- **Establish routines.** A routine can help you feel more in control and get you back on track for a solid season. Try to have some fun on the weekends, like making plans with friends, so you have something to look forward to.
- **Practice self-care.** This transition is also a good time to reinforce healthy routines like sleep hygiene, nutrition and movement. This practice can help you feel more physically and mentally prepared to take on challenges.
- **Embrace seasonal changes.** Enjoy fall activities, such as picking pumpkins and apples, hiking outdoors, baking with seasonal goods and watching the leaves change.

If you have any concerns about your well-being, reach out to a mental health professional.

# Recipe of the Month

## Apple Oatmeal Muffins

Makes: 6 servings

### Ingredients

- ½ cup nonfat milk
- ⅓ cup unsweetened applesauce
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- ½ cup quick-cooking oats (uncooked)
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ Tbsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 tart apple (cored and chopped)

### Nutritional Information

(per serving)

|                |        |
|----------------|--------|
| Total calories | 218    |
| Total fat      | 1 g    |
| Protein        | 3 g    |
| Sodium         | 132 mg |
| Carbohydrate   | 52 g   |
| Dietary fiber  | 2 g    |
| Saturated fat  | 0 g    |
| Total sugars   | 38 g   |

Source: MyPlate

### Preparations

1. Preheat the oven to 400 F.
2. Place 6 cupcake holders in a baking tin.
3. In a mixing bowl, add the milk and applesauce. Stir until blended.
4. Stir in the flour, oats, sugar, baking powder and cinnamon. Mix until moistened. Be careful not to overmix.
5. Gently stir in the chopped apples.
6. Spoon it into cupcake holders.
7. Bake for 15-20 minutes or until an inserted toothpick comes out clean.
8. Cool in the pan for 5 minutes before serving. Store unused portions in an airtight container.



# MENTAL HEALTH MINUTE

SEPTEMBER 2025



## The Importance of Positive Self-Talk

Positive self-talk is a powerful tool that can shape your mindset by boosting confidence and improving overall well-being. The way you speak to and about yourself can influence how you handle stress, overcome challenges and pursue goals. Replacing negative inner dialogue with compassionate affirmations can help you reform thinking patterns and create a more optimistic outlook.

Consider the following tips for practicing positive self-talk every day:

- **Choose a consistent time each day to say self-affirmations.** Consider setting an alarm each day to get into a routine of repeating affirmations to yourself. This could be when you first wake up or before you go to bed.
- **Place notes or artwork around your home that have self-affirmations on them.** It can help to have visual reminders to practice positive self-talk. Many people choose to write them on sticky notes and place them on a mirror

or near their workspaces.

- **Start a journal.** Many people prefer to write self-affirmations instead of saying them. Create a journal where you write positive self-talk and reflect on your progress.
- **Recognize negative self-talk and replace it.** It is essential to notice the moments when you say unkind things to yourself. Take a moment to reframe your thoughts and say a positive affirmation instead.

Remember, practicing positive self-talk is a journey, so the process of finding affirmations that benefit you should grow and evolve. These tips offer a starting point to begin your positive self-talk routine.

Don't hesitate to seek support from a trained health care provider if you need assistance with your mental well-being.

## Do You Know About 988?

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (Lifeline) was established in 2005 to help those in crisis. In 2022, the Lifeline simplified its number to 988 to make it easier for people to remember and access. In the three years since its relaunch, the call volume has increased by an estimated 40%. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration reports that the Lifeline has answered over 13 million calls, chats and texts across the country and its territories.

September is Suicide Awareness Month, a time to raise awareness, promote prevention efforts and support those affected by suicide. Suicide remains one of the leading causes of death in the United States, with an estimated 49,000 lives lost each year. Understanding how to use 988 can make a life-saving difference.

### How It Works

Using the Lifeline is free and confidential. When a person calls 988, they are given the option to connect to the Veterans Crisis Line, access help in Spanish or remain on the line.

If you speak a language other than English or Spanish, the 988 Lifeline uses Language Line Solutions to provide interpretation to callers in more than 240 additional languages. A video chat option is also available for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Once the call is routed, a trained counselor will listen, provide support and share resources. If the counselor feels the person is in danger, they will call emergency services with 911, but their goal is to do everything they can to help with a less invasive plan.

If the person prefers, they can text or chat online with a counselor in Spanish or English. Before they are connected with a counselor, they will be asked to fill out a quick survey.

Regardless of the method of contact, the 988 Lifeline is intended to alleviate emotional distress and offer support.

### Getting Help

Call or text 988 or visit [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org) if you or someone you know is experiencing mental health-related distress.

For further guidance, contact a mental health professional.

# Take Charge of Your Health



## Schedule Your Annual Checkup

An annual checkup with your primary care physician is crucial to your overall health. Not only can regular visits help you find potential health issues before they become more serious problems, but they also help build a strong relationship with your doctor, making it easier to address concerns and personalize your care plan. Also, an annual physical is generally covered under most health plans as it's considered preventive care.

Consider these additional reasons to schedule an annual checkup appointment with your doctor:



**Establish a baseline.** Annual checkups can create a health baseline, allowing your doctor to detect any unusual or abnormal health concerns before they become more serious.



**Stay current on vaccines.** During your yearly visit, your doctor may recommend several necessary vaccines to help keep you and your loved ones healthy.



**Detect disease early.** Preventive care (e.g., regular appointments and screenings) can allow you to discover diseases or illnesses before they cause serious health problems.



**Manage chronic diseases.** Annual doctor appointments are essential to manage existing diseases or medical conditions.



**Improve your relationship with your physician.** If you visit your doctor annually, you're more likely to feel comfortable with them and trust their advice.